



Security Council

Fifty-sixth year

Provisional

4277th meeting

Tuesday, 13 February 2001, 11.05 a.m.
New York

<i>President:</i>	Mr. Ben Mustapha	(Tunisia)
<i>Members:</i>	Bangladesh	Mr. Chowdhury
	China	Mr. Shen Guofang
	Colombia	Mr. Valdivieso
	France	Mr. Levitte
	Ireland	Mr. Cooney
	Jamaica	Miss Durrant
	Mali	Mr. Toure
	Mauritius	Mr. Neewoor
	Norway	Mr. Kolby
	Russian Federation	Mr. Lavrov
	Singapore	Mr. Mahbubani
	Ukraine	Mr. Kuchynski
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Harrison
	United States of America	Mr. Stoffer

Agenda

Security Council resolutions 1160 (1998), 1199 (1998), 1203 (1998), 1239 (1999) and 1244 (1999).

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The meeting was called to order at 11 05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted

Security Council resolutions 1160 (1998), 1199 (1998), 1203 (1998), 1239 (1999) and 1244 (1999)

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Sweden and Yugoslavia in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Mladenovic (Yugoslavia) took at seat at the Council table; Mr. Schori (Sweden) took the seat reserved for him at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, and in the absence of objection, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Jean-Marie Guéhenno, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I invite Mr. Guéhenno to take a seat at the Council table.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Security Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

At this meeting, the Council will hear a briefing by Mr. Jean-Marie Guéhenno, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, to whom I give the floor.

Mr. Guéhenno: I am pleased to provide members of the Security Council with an update on developments in Kosovo since our last briefing in mid-January.

The Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Haekkerup, has established four priorities for the next phase of the work of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK). These are, first, to establish a legal framework for provisional self-government in Kosovo, including preparations for province-wide elections; secondly, to complete the set-up of an effective law enforcement and judicial system; thirdly, to establish regular dialogue with the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and open an UNMIK office in Belgrade; and fourthly, to resolve legal property issues in order to build a more accountable and responsible local public administration and facilitate economic reconstruction. I will outline progress on each of these priorities before proceeding to more general issues.

The first priority is the development of a Kosovo legal framework. UNMIK is currently engaged in an intensive exercise to elaborate the key principles which will serve as the foundation for future discussions on the legal framework for provisional self-government. Once this process has been completed in the coming weeks, the Mission will begin close consultations with both its local interlocutors and the international community. The mechanisms through which powers will eventually be transferred to a provisional self-government will require careful scrutiny if the transfer is to be efficient and effective. The final decision on the powers and competencies will be taken by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General.

The mission's institution-building pillar, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), estimates that it will take eight months to prepare for province-wide elections. Much of the initial set-up work for the elections can begin before the legal framework has been finalized. Nevertheless, decisions on key elements of the framework must be completed by April if elections are to be held this year. Progress has already been made in the registration of habitual residents of Kosovo, and this work is indeed essential in order to update the voter lists needed for general elections.

Meanwhile, UNMIK has begun to restructure the Joint Interim Administrative Structure to take account of the municipal election results, which provided a measure of the level of support enjoyed by Kosovo's political parties, and to prepare for a smooth transition to an eventual locally managed structure. In this regard, UNMIK has identified some areas, including law

enforcement and the judiciary, where powers should be retained by the Mission. Departments are being encouraged to assume responsibility for the budgetary aspects of their activities. This is indeed essential, as the Kosovo consolidated budget should become increasingly reliant on domestically generated funds.

Work has continued on the implementation of the municipal election results. There has been further progress in the establishment of the municipal assemblies. So far, 18 of Kosovo's 30 municipalities have appointed their chief executive officers, and seven have fully set up their boards of directors.

The second priority is the development of law enforcement and the judicial system. The provision of law and order remains a high priority for UNMIK. To enhance the rule of law, a more unified judicial, police and civil administration coordination structure is being considered. Continuing work is being undertaken to improve the quality of the judiciary in Kosovo. Because of the urgent need for a justice system when UNMIK started, over 400 local judges and prosecutors were appointed. An assessment of their performance is now being undertaken, and screening mechanisms for prospective candidates are in place. This is a delicate task, and the Mission considers that negative political consequences, as well as local resistance, are possible.

UNMIK currently has 12 international judges and 5 international prosecutors who are responsible for dealing with the most sensitive cases related to war, ethnic or organized crimes. One key responsibility of these international personnel is to ensure that human rights are respected and that ethnic bias does not intrude into cases. However, this can sometimes strain the working relationship between local and international judges and prosecutors and may be perceived as lack of confidence in local judicial personnel. The Mission must therefore balance the need for effective and non-biased justice, which is supported by the presence of international personnel, with the importance of rehabilitating Kosovo's judiciary.

On the police side, UNMIK has established the Police Organized Crime Intelligence Unit. So far, 3,138 cadets have graduated from the Kosovo Police Service School. The focus for training is now shifting from basic training to supervisory training.

The third priority is the development of relations with the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the

opening of an UNMIK Belgrade office. The democratic changes in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and Serbia proper have provided an opportunity for a more constructive and meaningful relationship with Belgrade. The establishment of an UNMIK Belgrade office has been agreed in principle.

Negotiations are continuing with Yugoslav Government representatives on detainees and missing persons from Kosovo. The negotiations have focused on the exchange of accurate and complete information regarding the detainees, release of humanitarian cases and details of a proposed amnesty bill. UNMIK has requested that the amnesty bill should be extended to include all Kosovo Albanian detainees. Those not covered by the amnesty bill should be considered for release under other mechanisms available to the Serbian authorities, such as a presidential decree. The Mission has also suggested that any remaining Kosovo Albanian detainees should be handed over to UNMIK for a judicial review of their cases.

The fourth priority has to do with property issues, public administration and economic reconstruction – the socio-economic base of the development of Kosovo. Work is continuing on both the public and private sectors of Kosovo's economy. The Kosovo consolidated budget is now about 68 per cent funded from local resources, with 32 per cent coming, therefore, from donor contributions. These figures can be compared with those from 2000, which show a 50/50 split between local resources and donor contributions. The Mission is working to improve economic regulation and decrease the isolation of Kosovo's economy from those of its neighbours, as well as to encourage direct foreign investment in Kosovo. Work is continuing on plans to restore the viability of the Trepca industrial complex. Policy issues under consideration include generating support from the international community, developing a structure for engaging Kosovo residents in deliberations and a strategy to engage the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in the process. Other elements also to be considered are tackling the issues of interim management, ownership and debt claims, environmental damage reconciliation, restructuring and worker retraining, and the establishment of appropriate mining laws.

(spoke in French)

I should now like to turn to more general questions, first of all, those relating to security issues. There have been recent demonstrations in south Mitrovica which were sparked by the death of a Kosovo Albanian youth killed by a grenade attack on 29 January. The demonstrations became a focus for protest by which Kosovo Albanians wanted to show that they did not trust the Kosovo Force (KFOR) to be able to provide them with the necessary security. The protests appeared to be planned to some extent, as some protestors had gas masks and seemed to be well organized in small groups under local control. The Kosovo Police Service showed how useful it was and demonstrated its increasing effectiveness by ensuring that further gatherings in south Mitrovica were peaceful. The protests elicited little reaction from the Kosovo Serbs. However, there were reports of threats against the Kosovo Albanian minority in north Mitrovica; one house was reportedly burned down and abandoned apartments have been occupied. According to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), some 23 Kosovo Albanian families remain on the north side of the city.

In response, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and the Commander of KFOR visited Mitrovica and held discussions with both the local Albanian and Serb leadership. A joint declaration was signed by the Special Representative, the Commander of KFOR, the Mitrovica Municipal Assembly and local political representatives.

The declaration calls for enhanced security and for an expansion of the zone of confidence, ensuring freedom of movement for residents. It calls for the return of displaced persons, and for the establishment of functioning political structures. Work has begun to achieve these goals. However, representatives of all local Serb factions have signed a statement of non-concurrence with the joint declaration, arguing that the plan excluded Kosovo Serbs and that expansion of the zone of confidence was only for north Mitrovica. UNMIK is continuing its efforts to elicit Kosovo Serb support for the plan, so that the plan will have the support of all communities.

Another security concern relates to tension in the Presevo valley and in southern Serbia. Increased clashes, illegal checkpoints and training activities in the ground safety zone surrounding Kosovo. UNMIK and KFOR continue to take action against persons and activities inside Kosovo known to support the ethnic

Albanian fighters and that use the safety zone as a staging area. UNMIK is working with KFOR to implement effective measures in selected areas along the Kosovo side of the administrative boundary to control more effectively the movements of individuals attempting to support ethnic Albanian fighters. KFOR has over 100 suspected ethnic Albanian fighters in detention.

Discussions are continuing with the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and with Serbian and ethnic Albanian leaders to take effective measures to stop displacement and to encourage returns to the Presevo area. An inter-agency team including representatives from the United Nations Development Programme, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the United Nations Children's Fund and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has been sent to the region to conduct an assessment of basic humanitarian needs in the Presevo valley area. These efforts, along with those of the European Union and other international organizations, and a package of confidence-building measures developed by the Government in Belgrade, could help stabilize the situation and avert any negative impact on the Serb population in Kosovo.

Let me say a few words about problems relating to the treatment of minority communities in Kosovo. There appears to be a rise in attacks on Kosovo Serbs and their property in Prizren, Mitrovica, Gnjilane and Pristina. Pressure on Kosovo Serbs to sell their property remains high, particularly in municipalities where Serbs are mixed with other populations, such as Kosovo Polje in the Pristina region. Dialogue has begun with a wide range of Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Serbian and Kosovo Serb and Kosovo Albanian political and community leaders on the envisioned framework for Serb returns to Kosovo. The UNMIK Department of Reconstruction is also preparing to assess damaged housing and public buildings in 24 locations identified as having the potential for Kosovo Serb returns, pending identification of funding for necessary repairs to those buildings. Similar efforts are being reviewed for the return to Kosovo of members of other communities.

In the area of civil administration, the situation faced by Kosovo Serb teachers remains difficult following intimidation in northern Mitrovica, Strpce

and Leposavic. Kosovo Serb teachers and school support staff have been offered the same contractual conditions as Kosovo Albanian teachers and support staff. However, as a result of pressure from their communities and from Serbian educators, they have asked to receive different contracts temporarily.

In the more general area of economic activity in Kosovo, despite sustained efforts to promote economic recovery, unemployment in Kosovo remains very high. Social assistance programmes for the neediest unemployed have been established. A public works scheme is under development to provide temporary employment for uneducated and unskilled people.

Turning to the question of depleted uranium, a draft report on the effects of depleted uranium has been prepared by a World Health Organization assessment team. It concludes that the threat to public health and the environment from depleted uranium is minimal. It also recommends an information campaign to encourage public reporting of discoveries of depleted-uranium rounds, improved medical health data and an effective information system on the health situation in Kosovo to help closely monitor all aspects of the situation, including with respect to depleted uranium.

To conclude, the four priorities set out in January by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General are the road map for UNMIK's activities in the coming months. The development of the legal framework for elections and provisional self-government, which would provide the people of Kosovo with substantial autonomy, is a complex exercise. It should not be rushed, nor should there be any unnecessary delay. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General will, of course, retain the final say on all these fundamental matters.

Other pressing issues which we must address include the continuing threats to the safety and security of individuals and the ongoing struggle to establish the rule of law in Kosovo. The situation in the Presevo valley and the recent unrest in Mitrovica have had a significant and regrettable impact on the activities of UNMIK, as well as serious negative implications for fulfilment by KFOR and by UNMIK of their responsibility to provide a stable security environment in Kosovo. In the short term, these challenges, these threats, may increase. In the longer term, UNMIK will continue to look to the Security Council for the political support that it needs to find the just balance

between the day-to-day administration of Kosovo and setting up the interim administration in which the people of Kosovo can enjoy a substantial level of autonomy, in accordance with resolution 1244 (1999).

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to thank Mr. Guéhenno for his comprehensive briefing.

Mr. Levitte (France) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank most warmly Mr. Jean-Marie Guéhenno for his clear and precise briefing. The position of the European Union, which France entirely endorses, will be put forward by the representative of Sweden. I would just like to make a few comments to complete and supplement what Ambassador Schori will be saying.

It is essential that violence be curbed in Kosovo. Since June 1999, impressive progress has been made. The international community has played a decisive role in this evolution. The Kosovo Force (KFOR) has met the challenge before it in a frequently difficult environment. It has taken courageous action to preserve the security of the peoples. This was the case just recently in Mitrovica, where some 20 soldiers from KFOR were wounded.

However, reducing tensions is first the responsibility of the Kosovars themselves. To promote the involvement of citizens in this struggle against violence, the Kosovo political leaders bear particular responsibility. Their active support is required. In this connection, following the Mitrovica events, the statement published on 1 February by Albanian leaders in Kosovo to condemn the violence was a positive sign.

In the Mitrovica area as well as elsewhere, détente must be sought. We give our full support to the efforts of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) and KFOR to bring the violence among the ethnic groups to an end and to guarantee to all the inhabitants the security that all ethnic groups have the right to claim, and also to overcome as quickly as possible the division amongst the communities.

Relating to the holding of general elections, I would like to emphasize that it is necessary at the start to have a precise definition of the nature and functions of the provisional institutions that will be elected. Preparation in impeccable conditions is also a prerequisite. Everything must be implemented in order

to ensure the participation of all communities, particularly the Serbian community, in the elections.

At this time, continuing discussions amongst the Kosovars of all ethnic origins concerning the temporary structures of the autonomy, under the authority of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, is a necessary step. It would be desirable for the other parties to be informed of those discussions and then to be associated to them. From this angle, setting up an UNMIK office in Belgrade is a positive measure.

With regard to the situation concerning the administrative border between Kosovo and the southern part of Serbia, the presidential statement of the Security Council on 19 December 2000, as well as the statement to the press on 30 January 2001, made possible a strong condemnation of the activities of terrorist groups.

Political steps taken recently by the Belgrade authorities, under the aegis of President Kostunica, are part of the attempt to find a peaceful solution. We should support this willingness by Belgrade to undertake, despite any difficulties encountered, negotiations with local representatives of the Albanian community. Support by the international community for economic, political and social measures to help the peoples of the area, particularly those of Albanian origin, will also be necessary. The European Union, for its part, has already earmarked close to €1 million for humanitarian work in the Presevo region and intends to do more in the future.

KFOR, for its part, has strengthened its staff on the administrative border. These measures will make possible closer monitoring of illegal activities in that area. Any solution in the Presevo valley would also require that there be cooperation between KFOR and Belgrade, including in the field.

Mr. Lavrov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I would like to thank Under-Secretary-General Guehenno for his detailed briefing.

In spite of the efforts made by the international community for a long time now, the situation in Kosovo remains a very complex one. In recent days, there has been a serious aggravation of the situation in Mitrovica, where there have been massive conflicts between Albanian and Serbian inhabitants in which the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in

Kosovo (UNMIK) and the Kosovo Force (KFOR) have become involved. There is a continued tension in the ground security zone in the Presevo valley. We all know that this has been caused by the constant feeding from Kosovo of the Kosovar Albanian extremists that have been entrenched there.

The Special Envoy of the United Nations Secretary-General to the Balkans, Carl Bildt, recently called the situation in the Presevo valley the most serious threat to stability in the Balkans. We carefully followed the activities of the international presence in preventing the forays of extremists and preventing the spread of inter-ethnic conflict. However, the events that are unfolding in Kosovo and neighbouring regions reaffirm the conclusion that we have repeatedly made to the effect that, unfortunately, for the time being we do not see any qualitative breakthrough for the better in compliance with Security Council resolution 1244 (1999).

There is no perceptible progress in the launching of the political process leading to a comprehensive settlement of the problem of Kosovo. It is a bad resolution — if it is being resolved at all — of the problem of the return of refugees and the restoration of a multi-ethnic society in the region where all nationalities would be guaranteed equal security. In this context, we regard as subject to dispute the advisability of the speedy holding in Kosovo of region-wide elections. Without ensuring the necessary level of security, there can be no return of refugees, who number, I would recall, approximately 200,000 individuals. This means that such elections would not be representative in nature. There is also no clarity in the question of the powers of the future regional bodies, which must be developed with the direct participation not just of the various groups in Kosovo and not just of the representatives of the international community, but with the direct participation of Belgrade.

All of this speaks to the inappropriateness of artificially forcing the urgency of preparing for elections in Kosovo. We note that recently the leadership of UNMIK has tried to take a balanced approach to this question of preparing for elections. There is no doubt that before the beginning of the campaign, there should be full clarity as to the understanding of the so-called substantial autonomy, in accordance with resolution 1244 (1999).

As we understand it, that is the purpose of the United Nations in preparing UNMIK legal frameworks for self-governing bodies in Kosovo. But I repeat once again, preparations for such frameworks should necessarily involve the participation of the authorities in Belgrade. Of course, the Security Council itself has to play a central role in the definitive solution, both with regard to the question of the concept of central autonomy for Kosovo within the framework of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and that of the time-frame for the holding of elections.

Constant attention should be given to the situation in the ground security zone in the south of Serbia. We believe that the latest proposals by Belgrade to solve this problem deserve full support. I have in mind the programme to settle the crisis in the south of Serbia, which was adopted on 6 February by the Government of Serbia, as well as the statements made by Yugoslav authorities regarding the possibility of holding talks with Albanian leaders in the Presevo Valley area.

On the whole, we believe that it is extremely important for the international community to overcome stereotypes in its views regarding the initiatives emerging from Belgrade. We trust that doing so will help to bring about the opening of an UNMIK office in the capital of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia as soon as possible. We would once again like to emphasize that without the close cooperation of the international presence with the Yugoslav authorities, we can have no compliance with resolution 1244 (1999) or arrive at a comprehensive resolution of the situation.

One of the steps to be taken in this regard must be — finally — the signing of the relevant agreements on the status of the international presence in Kosovo. The Security Council could give that process the relevant political impetus. The signing of those agreements could also help strengthen the legal basis to ensure the safety of UNMIK and Kosovo Force staff in their efforts to achieve comprehensive compliance with resolution 1244 (1999).

We continue to be concerned about the ongoing serious contradictions in the activities of the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia. I know we will soon discuss this particular topic in the Security Council, but I would also like to touch on it today as well. In both the Security Council and the

General Assembly, we have repeatedly spoken of the inadmissibility both of the politicization of the Tribunal and of a selective approach to identifying those who bear guilt for the Yugoslav tragedy. However, prejudice in the work of the Tribunal, including anti-Serb bias, persists. We can see this above all in the activities of the Tribunal's Prosecutor, Ms. Carla Del Ponte.

Another issue to which we have repeatedly referred is the fact that, despite our many requests, information on the details of the tragedy in Racak has been concealed from members of the Security Council. It was only in February of this year that we finally received a reply, signed by Under-Secretary-General Jean-Marie Guéhenno, which told us that the Ms. Del Ponte, the Tribunal's Prosecutor, had decided that she could sanction the distribution of only a summary of the report of that investigation, but not the full text of the report itself. Unfortunately, the summary we received is vague in nature and does not give a clear picture of what actually happened in Racak or who was responsible for the tragedy. We believe the top-secrecy in which the Tribunal has tried to veil its factual study is absolutely inappropriate. We are convinced that the members of the Security Council must finally receive the full text of the report on the events in Racak. Ms. Carla Del Ponte does not represent a private organization, but rather the Tribunal established by a decision of the Security Council, which should be responsible to the Council. If she has some secrets from the Council, we believe that is unacceptable.

A similar approach was shown in November of last year, when we asked the Secretary-General to distribute as an official document of the Security Council a text of a memorandum of understanding between the Tribunal and the headquarters of the armed forces of the alliance in Europe. That memorandum was concluded between the Tribunal and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in 1996. However, despite our requests, the text of that memorandum has thus far not been issued and remains secret. Therefore, on 28 December 2000 we were compelled to issue a reminder of that request. We continue to await a response. In the meantime, Ms. Carla Del Ponte has publicly stated that such a memorandum does not exist. To put it mildly, that is an attempt to mislead the world community. Everyone knows that such a memorandum does exist, and references to it are to be found in reports submitted by

the Secretary-General to the Council. We insist that the text be distributed to the Security Council and the we dot the i's and cross the t's on this issue.

We also feel that it is time to talk about the future activities of the Tribunal itself. Resolution 1329 (2000), which the Security Council adopted on 30 November 2000, asks the Secretary-General to submit proposals as soon as possible regarding a date for the cessation of the temporary jurisdiction of the Tribunal. We believe the Council could already have been informed about proposed time-frames for compliance with its instructions.

With regard to the use of depleted uranium munitions in Yugoslavia by NATO, which Mr. Guéhenno referred to today, we believe that the studies conducted by the United Nations Environment Programme and the World Health Organization have not given us answers to all the questions. Therefore, along with many other countries, we advocate the conduct of an independent experts' study of the consequences of the use of such munitions in order to determine the real dangers to the environment and the population, as well as to overcome the obstacles to determining steps to be taken to prevent threats to people's health. NATO countries that took part in the military action against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia should assume the relevant costs.

The Security Council should also continue to keep under its review all aspects of the situation in Kosovo and the activities of the international presence in the region. We understand that the new leadership of UNMIK and Mr. Hans Haekkerup need time to look at the situation locally and determine priorities for their activities. We of course support the efforts of Mr. Haekkerup in every way, in order that he may be able to determine clear ways to reach complete and comprehensive compliance with resolution 1244 (1999). We trust that once he is settled in Kosovo the members of the Council will find it possible to hear directly from him an appraisal of the situation and his views on how to achieve full compliance with resolution 1244 (1999) and how to normalize the situation in the region. We hope that such a meeting with Mr. Haekkerup will take place in the Council next month.

We also believe it appropriate to think, in consultation with Mr. Haekkerup, about the issue of a new Security Council mission to Kosovo. That mission

would of course include a visit to Belgrade, and perhaps also visit the Presevo Valley if the security situation allows. We trust that, in the week to come, the members of the Security Council, along with our colleagues in the Secretariat and the leadership of UNMIK, will discuss the specific parameters of this proposal.

Mr. Chowdhury (Bangladesh): I thank Under-Secretary-General Guéhenno for his briefing on the situation in Kosovo.

It has been about a month since the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General and head of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) assumed his responsibilities. His predecessor, Mr. Kouchner, has left behind a firm foundation on which to build, but the task of the new Special Representative is by no means an easy one.

In our statement to the Council last month, we underscored a number of priorities for Special Representative of the Secretary-General Hans Haekkerup. We are happy to see that he has already been acting on some of the priorities, particularly focusing on the preparation of a legal framework for the forthcoming general elections in Kosovo and guaranteeing security as a top priority for UNMIK.

In today's statement, I will limit myself to the following four points relevant to recent developments in Kosovo.

First, curbing violence and improving security continue to be the top priority in Kosovo. All arrangements must be put in place that will make all people, irrespective of their ethnicity, feel safe. We are concerned that yet another spate of violence occurred in Mitrovica late in January and that the anger of the crowd was directed against the United Nations peacekeepers. We hope that the declaration signed after the incident by the Kosovo Albanian leaders, which was also endorsed by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, will work to restore calm in the city. We believe that, without stabilization of the security situation in Mitrovica, it is impossible to address the longer-term issues involving the future viability and integration of the city. We urge both parties in the northern and southern parts of the city to exercise restraint and to protect their minorities.

Secondly, with respect to missing persons and detainees, we appreciate the emphasis given by the new

Special Representative of the Secretary-General to the return of all Kosovo prisoners detained in Serbia. We are encouraged by the new amnesty bill currently in the Serbian Parliament for the release of prisoners. The process needs to be expedited and all who would be covered by its provisions should be promptly released. Those who will not fall under the scope of the amnesty law should also be returned to Kosovo. We support Mr. Haekkerup's proposal that their cases be processed through a judicial review conducted under United Nations supervision.

We expect a comprehensive solution to the issue of missing persons and detainees in Kosovo. We believe that a resolution of this problem will significantly contribute to the reduction of inter-ethnic tensions. Last month, we wanted the Secretariat to brief us on the outcome of the mandate of the Special Envoy on Persons Deprived of Liberty, Ambassador Henrik Amneus. We reiterate that request for action by the Secretariat.

Thirdly, as to the judiciary, a greater level of judicial activity has been seen in Kosovo, particularly recently with the increase in the number of personnel and material resources. The appointment of about a dozen international judges to look into ethnicity-related crimes has brought about great improvement in judicial actions. The swearing in of 137 judges on 24 January was also a significant step. We believe that this reinforcement will visibly contribute to uprooting crime and fostering multi-ethnic coexistence.

Fourthly, with respect to depleted uranium, my delegation expressed the view that it would be appropriate for the Council to watch the question of links between depleted uranium and medical cases in Kosovo. We are to some extent relieved that the team of experts from the World Health Organization (WHO), investigating upon request of UNMIK, has found no proven link between exposure to depleted uranium and the onset of cancers, congenital abnormalities or serious toxic chemical effects on the organs of the peacekeepers or residents of Kosovo. We note that the WHO team of experts has recommended that its findings be confirmed by a larger body of independent experts.

We are encouraged by the attention given by the new head of UNMIK to the immediate priorities in Kosovo. We particularly note his emphasis on the completion of a legal framework that will enable the

participation of all Kosovars, including minorities. We believe that only leaders democratically elected through a fair and full participatory process are in a position to put forward views on the critical outstanding issues in Kosovo.

In the past 19 months, Kosovo has come a long way, from being a war-ravaged society to one with prospects of a peaceful future. The constant support of the international community is crucial at this point to sustaining and consolidating the gains achieved and to moving towards a future of peaceful coexistence.

Mr. Harrison (United Kingdom): I would like through you, Sir, to thank Mr. Guéhenno for his useful briefing on recent developments in Kosovo. The Ambassador of Sweden will address the Council later on behalf of the European Union. My delegation, naturally, endorses the comments he will make. I would like to highlight just four points.

First, the recent violence in Mitrovica and the security incidents in southern Serbia outlined by Mr. Guéhenno this morning are being committed by extremists. These extremists are working against peace and against the wishes of their wider communities. Their actions are unacceptable. My Government condemns the actions of the perpetrators of these incidents unreservedly. The only long-term solution to the problems of Kosovo, including those thrown up by the events in Mitrovica and southern Serbia, is through dialogue and ethnic reconciliation. In this regard, we fully support the efforts of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) and the Kosovo Force to resolve the situation in Mitrovica.

Secondly, more needs to be done to address and improve the law and order situation throughout Kosovo. We welcome the high priority that has been given to this issue by Mr. Haekkerup and we welcome the fact that Mr. Guéhenno gave considerable attention to the issue in his briefing. We would welcome Mr. Guéhenno's views on what more can be done. For example, does UNMIK have sufficient international judges and prosecutors for its needs and, if not, is there scope for increasing the number of judges and prosecutors, perhaps on a temporary basis?

Thirdly, the United Kingdom welcomes the plan put forward by the federal and Serbian republican Governments for southern Serbia, which was formally announced last week. We are studying it carefully. It is

encouraging that both sides appear to be willing to find a peaceful, political solution to these problems.

Fourthly and finally, last month my delegation, like many others, welcomed the draft amnesty bill on political prisoners that had been adopted by the Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. We now need to see concrete steps. We call on the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the Serb Governments to release all Kosovo Albanian prisoners held without charge or on political grounds. This would be a major confidence-building measure between Belgrade and Kosovo and it would probably bring about a qualitative improvement in the security situation in Kosovo.

Mr. Mahbubani (Singapore): I too would like to thank Under-Secretary-General Jean-Marie Guéhenno for his comprehensive briefing. It is unfortunate that the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Kosovo, Mr. Hans Haekkerup, is not able to meet with the Council today. I think, as Ambassador Lavrov said, it would have been useful to meet him early in his term, and my delegation looks forward to his addressing the Council soon. At the same time, we extend our support to him as he carries out the difficult tasks ahead.

In the interest of time, I will not read out my full statement, which we will post on our Web site. Today I shall try to summarize the statement, which touches on three key areas: the new violence in Kosovo, the situation in the Presevo Valley and the preparations for the elections.

In our statement at the Council's open meeting on Kosovo last month, we emphasized the aim of returning Kosovo to normalcy. Unfortunately, the events since the meeting seem to serve as a warning that things could move in the opposite direction if the Council, the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) and the Kosovo Force (KFOR) do not prevent the security situation in Kosovo, especially in Mitrovica and the Presevo Valley, from deteriorating further.

We therefore believe, as many other speakers have said, that all necessary steps must be taken to improve the security environment in both Kosovo and the Presevo Valley. What happened in Mitrovica especially was shocking. There were even grenade attacks on KFOR troops, UNMIK civilian police officers and civilian workers, resulting in scores of soldiers and policemen being injured. This cannot be

condoned when the very people who are sent to provide security and enforce law and order become the objects of violence; then things have gone seriously wrong, as several speakers have noted.

The practical effects of such developments are clear. United Nations humanitarian agencies and non-governmental organizations were forced to withdraw their staff from the effected area of Mitrovica and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner of Refugees (UNHCR) had to temporarily suspend freedom of movement past lines. This is, incidentally, reminiscent of the events we witnessed in the refugee area in West Timor last year, when, we recall, the Council actually reacted strongly.

Given this dangerous situation, we welcome, like France, the declaration made by the Kosovar-Albanian leaders, which condemned the violence in Mitrovica, and we call on all Kosovars to remain calm and to refrain from further acts of violence. We hope that UNMIK and KFOR can do what is appropriate and necessary to improve the security situation in Mitrovica, and, like others, we would also like to give our full support to the priority Mr. Hans Haekkerup has given to strengthening law and order in Kosovo.

Let me now turn quickly to another hot spot: the Presevo Valley. When the situation was heating up towards the end of last month, the Council made a statement to the press, and, unfortunately, all the elements of the press statement still remain valid today: violence in Presevo should cease, all ethnic Albanian extremists groups should be dissolved, all non-residents engaged in extremist activities should withdraw from their areas, and so forth. We want to impress on the parties involved that these calls should be heeded. Here — if we may make an additional suggestion — it may be useful for the Council, from time to time, to assess whether its calls, in press statements or presidential statements, have been heeded or ignored. This may show whether our press statements are actually heeded or not.

We are glad that the Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia has formulated a peace plan for the Presevo Valley. We welcome its resolve to settle the problem peacefully and to integrate ethnic Albanians into the local structures. In the end, we believe that the solution must be a political one. This is why we are concerned to read press reports that the Liberation Army of Presevo, Medvedja and Bujanovac (UCPMB)

has rejected the peace plan, including the political measures, and has said that it will settle for nothing less than the Presevo Valley becoming part of ethnic Albanian-dominated Kosovo. We hope that the ethnic Albanians will pursue peaceful negotiations and that the Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia will continue to exercise restraint. It is also imperative that UNMIK and KFOR take all necessary measures to prevent the movement of extremists and arms from Kosovo to the Presevo Valley.

Finally, on my third point, turning to non-security issues, we certainly take note of and support the priorities that have been spelled out by Mr. Haekkerup and also by Mr. Jean-Marie Guéhenno this morning. The legal framework for Kosovo-wide elections must be developed before they are held. The process should involve all the relevant parties, including the Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. In this regard, we believe that UNMIK's establishment of direct contacts with the Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and an office in Belgrade is a move in the right direction. The release of political detainees from Serbian prisons and the revelation of the whereabouts of missing persons in Kosovo, should also be resolved as a matter of priority. Here again, we support the call that Mr. Jean-Marie Guéhenno made when he referred to this.

We believe that these measures will contribute to the reconciliation that is essential for improving the security situation. Building public administration capacity and economic reconstruction are also important and necessary for bringing Kosovo back to normal. All these priorities require that the United Nations and the international community continue to be actively involved in Kosovo.

Mr. Stoffer (United States of America): My delegation, too, would like to thank Under-Secretary-General Guéhenno for his informative briefing, and we reiterate our support for the new Special Representative in Kosovo. We understand that Special Representative Haekkerup will be coming to New York in March, and we look forward to hearing his views on the challenges that remain in Kosovo.

The prospects of a lasting peace in the Balkans have clearly brightened somewhat due to the democratic developments in Yugoslavia last year. The successful municipal elections in Kosovo last October and the progress of the United Nations Interim

Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) in implementing the results over the last several months also reassure us that we are making steady progress in implementing resolution 1244 (1999). We are glad to hear that UNMIK is moving forward on the necessary regulations, which will define the institutional framework of Kosovo's provisional self-government, including Kosovo-wide elections. We urge UNMIK to move quickly to promulgate the necessary regulations and to organize Kosovo-wide elections as soon as possible in 2001.

However, there are still some dark clouds on the horizon. The continuing unrest and violence in Mitrovica and other parts of Kosovo threaten this progress. We condemn the recent violence in Mitrovica and lament the tragic deaths that resulted, but we take note that UNMIK and the Kosovo Force (KFOR) were joined by key Kosovar Albanian leaders in urging restraint and a return of calm in the troubled city. The declaration issued by Kosovar Albanian leaders in response to the recent unrest was also promising. It focused on confidence-building measures, but also expressed the commitment to freedom of movement and the establishment of functioning political structures that include all sides and factions.

While we acknowledge genuine Serb security concerns in Mitrovica, the way to address these concerns is for Serbs to cooperate with UNMIK and KFOR, participate in the administration of the city and take jobs in the Kosovo police service. We call on the democratic authorities in Belgrade to send a clear message to all those in Kosovo to participate in municipal assemblies and to cooperate with UNMIK in addressing the political and security issues that will help reduce violence and encourage Serb refugees to return and all others who have been displaced to come back to their homes.

We also strongly condemn the violence across the Kosovo administrative border, in and around the ground safety zone. We applaud the vigorous measures that KFOR has taken to control that administrative border and stop all material support for the extremists operating in southern Serbia. We continue to call on the Kosovar leadership to reject the violent approach of these individuals, and we encourage local leaders in and around the ground safety zone to cooperate with the Yugoslav authorities in finding a political solution to their problems.

We welcome the recent proposal put forward by the Belgrade Government to institute reforms, to engage local Albanian leaders, to develop a series of confidence-building measures, to restore calm and to build the foundations of peace in and around the ground safety zone. Obviously, many details remain to be worked out, and there are some aspects of the current puzzle about which we have some concern. In general, though, we believe the plan provides a sound basis on which to begin addressing the problems of the Presevo Valley.

We applaud the Yugoslav Government's restraint and its assurances that it will continue to respect the Military-Technical Agreement. The Council has expressed itself very clearly in this regard. There is no acceptable military solution to the problems in the Presevo Valley. As we understand the Yugoslav proposal, the first step is to put in place a number of reforms and to begin to engage the population of the Presevo area constructively, and we applaud that. We also understand the Deputy Prime Minister Kovic will be briefing the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe later this week on this proposal, and we in the Council look forward to learning more details about this plan.

My Government has worked closely with the Belgrade authorities in supporting a political approach to the problems in and around the ground safety zone, and we will be looking forward to ways to implement the Yugoslav Government's plan.

Mr. Kuchynski (Ukraine): I am thankful to Under-Secretary-General Guéhenno for his very comprehensive briefing on the latest events in Kosovo and on the activities of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) during the period under review.

Since my country's position and assessment of different aspects of the current situation in Kosovo have been presented at our previous meetings and basically remain unchanged, I will comment only on some of the latest events in Kosovo in the context of UNMIK's activities.

The past month saw both positive tendencies towards a general improvement of the situation in Kosovo and some worrying developments in terms of security in and around the province. My country fully recognizes the constructive role played by UNMIK and

the Kosovo Force (KFOR) in facing these new challenges and in fostering further progress in implementing resolution 1244 (1999) under very difficult conditions.

We reconfirm our support for the priorities for UNMIK's activities outlined by Mr. Haekkerup and for the first steps made towards their implementation. The proper elaboration of a legal framework for Kosovo-wide general elections is of particular importance for the future of Kosovo. Therefore, we share the view that it would not be prudent to speed up the election process unless all of its aspects are clearly defined and the security situation in the region is stable enough. My delegation still believes that the Council should be briefed on the results of this work before UNMIK proceeds further with the holding of the elections.

We also find it important to implement the other priority actions set out by Mr. Haekkerup — specifically, improving the security situation in Kosovo and fighting crime through more effective law enforcement measures. In this context, we believe that recent UNMIK police actions carried out across the province against drug dealers aimed at seizing drugs and illegal weapons have proved effective and should continue. It is also noteworthy that during the past month, the regulation signed into law by the head of UNMIK in January on criminal punishment for human trafficking has started to show its first results, as the first guilty verdict for trafficking in women was issued a week ago in Kosovo.

My country is of the view that the establishment of a proper dialogue and close cooperation between UNMIK and the Yugoslav authorities is a necessary prerequisite for furthering the peace process in Kosovo. Therefore we encourage the head of UNMIK to do his utmost in this regard to ensure the earliest possible opening of UNMIK's office in Belgrade.

While noting positive trends, we still remain concerned at the security situation in and around Kosovo. We were deeply alarmed at the new flare-up of violence which took place in Mitrovica and joined the call made to local communities to exercise restraint and tolerance in relation to each other and to international personnel. In its assessment of the recent upsurge in violence in that town, Ukraine associated itself with the European Union's declaration of 2 February. We also welcome the joint declaration signed

on 1 February by UNMIK, KFOR and Kosovo Albanian leaders on the situation in that town.

At the same time, my delegation pays tribute to the courage and professionalism demonstrated by KFOR peacekeepers in easing tensions in Mitrovica and laments the injuries they sustained. It is our firm belief that any acts of violence or threats directed against international military, police or civilian personnel in Kosovo are absolutely inadmissible and should not be tolerated.

During the past month, the security situation in Kosovo and in the whole region was seriously challenged by the spreading violence in the ground safety zone, which continued to claim human lives. On 30 January, my delegation joined in the statement made to the press by the President of the Security Council condemning the ethnic attacks by Albanian extremist groups against Serbian police, calling for the dissolution of these groups and their immediate withdrawal from the area. Concern in relation to those events was also expressed in the statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine of 30 January.

In our view, the situation in the Presevo Valley has reached a critical stage and could not only undermine the peace efforts in Kosovo but destabilize the situation in the whole region. Therefore, in our view, every effort should be made to end the continuing Albanian insurgency in the Presevo Valley in order to avoid the worst-case scenario. In this regard, we acknowledge the readiness of the Serbian Government to negotiate with the Presevo Albanian representatives in order to find solutions to existing problems.

We also took note of the conclusions announced at the beginning of February by experts from the World Health Organization, and confirmed today by Mr. Guehenno, that the threat to human health caused by exposure to depleted uranium in Kosovo is minimal. While we are satisfied with these conclusions, nonetheless we look forward to hearing the final results of the investigations carried out by other relevant United Nations and international agencies.

We believe that the idea of sending a new Security Council mission to Kosovo, to Belgrade and possibly to the Presevo Valley to get firsthand information on the situation on the ground, as proposed today by the Russian Federation, deserves our full support.

In conclusion, let me reiterate our view that the preservation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia is one of the basic provisions of resolution 1244 (1999) and one of the key factors contributing to stability in the Balkans. Therefore, this premise should remain a starting point for further UNMIK and KFOR activities in Kosovo and should be the basis for the Security Council's assessment of these activities.

Mr. Shen Guofang (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): At the outset, I should like to thank Under-Secretary-General Guehenno for his comprehensive briefing.

The Chinese delegation remains concerned at the current situation in Kosovo. We condemn the acts of terrorism that have occurred recently in Mitrovica.

The Chinese delegation is of the view that the key issue now facing Kosovo is the violent conflict between ethnic communities, and in particular the fact that the life and security of ethnic Serbs cannot be guaranteed. Long-term efforts must be made to resolve this question in order to promote harmony and tolerance between ethnic communities so that they can live in peace.

Effective measures must be taken to end the violence and improve the security situation.

We have noted the recent efforts made by UNMIK under the leadership of Mr. Haekkerup, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, and the four priorities that it has identified in its work. We hope that the steps being taken by UNMIK will contribute to harmony and tolerance among the ethnic communities so that they can live together peacefully. At the same time, we hope that UNMIK will cooperate with the Kosovo Force (KFOR) in taking specific and effective measures to ensure that all the residents of Kosovo can live in an environment free from violence, intimidation and harassment; to effectively protect ethnic minorities, and especially to ensure the safety of ethnic Serbs; to speed up the safe return of ethnic minority refugees; to curb extremist nationalist forces; and to ease the tension in Kosovo, so that Security Council resolution 1244 (1999) can be implemented in a comprehensive manner.

Elections in Kosovo are another focus of attention for the international community. The briefing by Under-Secretary-General Guehenno will help us to understand the developments in this field. We hope to

receive further briefings about how UNMIK is cooperating with the other parties concerned in preparing for elections so as to ensure that the whole population, especially the ethnic Serbs, can participate in them on an equal footing and that their outcome is in compliance with resolution 1244 (1999).

In this regard, the Chinese delegation encourages UNMIK to further strengthen its dialogue with the Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. We have taken note of the reference to the actions taken by UNMIK to this end. The Chinese delegation believes that dialogue is not enough; it is more important to undertake cooperation and to pay serious attention to the views of the Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. At the same time, we hope that UNMIK will actively encourage and urge ethnic Albanians in Kosovo to engage in dialogue with the Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and study how to solve the question of Kosovo at its roots in a fair and reasonable manner. A comprehensive resolution of the question of Kosovo must involve the full participation of the Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

In resolving the question of Kosovo, the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia must be fully respected. The Chinese delegation is very concerned about the volatile situation in the Presevo Valley. China appreciates the restraint shown so far by the Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and its commitment to a peaceful settlement of the dispute. We welcome the peace plan proposed by that Government. This demonstrates the readiness and goodwill of the Serbian side to achieve conciliation with the ethnic Albanians in the region. We hope that the proposal will be received positively by the Albanian side. At the same time, the international community, including the Security Council, should also support the positive efforts of the Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

The Chinese delegation supports the proposal of Ambassador Lavrov to send a Security Council mission to Kosovo, to the capital of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and to the Presevo Valley, and we hope that the Council will give it serious consideration.

With regard to the question of depleted uranium munitions, we hope that the investigation conducted under the auspices of the United Nations will proceed

smoothly and that we will be informed promptly of the harm caused to the population and the environment of Kosovo.

Mr. Cooney (Ireland): I would like to express our gratitude to you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting today, and to thank Under-Secretary-General Guéhenno for his informative briefing on the situation in Kosovo. Ireland fully subscribes to the detailed statement which will be delivered by the Permanent Representative of Sweden, as the presidency of the European Union. I would like to highlight some issues which we consider to be of particular significance.

We continue to believe that full implementation of Security Council resolution 1244 (1999) must remain the aim of the international community in Kosovo. We welcome the substantial progress made in this regard and believe that the Security Council must sustain a positive momentum in the implementation of the resolution.

Last month, we welcomed Mr. Hans Haekkerup as the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK). Since then, Mr. Haekkerup has had an opportunity to consult widely with actors in the region and to further develop his approach. While we understand the impatience of people in the region to push ahead with elections, we fully support Mr. Haekkerup's view regarding the need to establish a legal and administrative framework before such elections can take place.

Last month, we had the opportunity to receive a briefing from the Chairman-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, who confirmed that eight months of conceptual and technical preparation are needed. Ireland believes that this is essential in order to define the mandate and composition of a Kosovo-wide assembly, to fully implement the results of last year's local elections and to complete voter registration, so that all ethnic groups will be properly represented in the next elections. It will also be necessary to define an executive body which will be accountable to the assembly.

Like our partners in the European Union and others in this Chamber, we are concerned about recent incidents within Kosovo, mainly in the area of Mitrovica, as described earlier by Mr. Guéhenno. Such violence and use of inciteful rhetoric can only have negative consequences, and we urge political leaders in

Kosovo to take more responsibility for developing a peaceful and tolerant society. We condemn the attacks on international personnel. The international community must be allowed to fulfil its duties without being subjected to such unacceptable violence.

My delegation is also extremely concerned about the violence in southern Serbia. We repeat our strong condemnation of this violence, which endangers not only the Presevo Valley, but the overall security of the region. We commend the efforts of the Kosovo Force to prevent an escalation of the situation, as well as the restraint shown by the Yugoslav authorities and their commitment to respect the Military-Technical Agreement and the provisions of resolution 1244 (1999). Ireland believes that the international community must address this problem in a sensible and resolute manner. We welcome the development of recent initiatives that stress the need for a long-term, comprehensive settlement, including that put forward recently by the Yugoslav authorities, which we are studying carefully with our European Union partners.

Ireland believes that the recent political changes within the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia will continue to have a positive effect on the stability and prosperity of the region as a whole. However, we note that the situation of Kosovar Albanian political prisoners held in Serbia is not yet fully resolved, despite the welcome adoption of the amnesty law. We applaud the efforts of UNMIK as outlined by Mr. Guéhenno in this regard, and we join with others in calling for appropriate legal channels to be found for the speedy release of these people, many of whom have been held in detention for over two years. We believe that a swift conclusion to this issue would be an important step towards reconciliation.

Progress must also be made regarding missing persons, as well as in facilitating the return by Kosovo Serbs and others to their homes in Kosovo. We urge all Governments of the region to develop further confidence-building measures and to work towards peace, based on democratic principles and full respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms and equality of all citizens and national communities.

In conclusion, we affirm that Ireland will remain fully supportive of the efforts of the Secretary-General in Kosovo.

Mr. Valdivieso (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping

Operations, Mr. Guéhenno, for updating the Council on the situation in the field. We would ask him to convey to all the personnel of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) and of the Kosovo Force (KFOR) our expressions of support for their work.

In my statement today, I shall focus on three areas that I had originally planned to address, plus one that I think I should add in the light of what others have said. The first three are security problems, the organization of elections, and the peace plan proposed by the Belgrade authorities.

With respect to security problems, as has been said, we must condemn attacks on United Nations personnel, who, along with the personnel of the various humanitarian agencies, are unconditionally serving the local population; that must be understood and respected by every one of the actors in this conflict. The rights of all minorities must be respected, as stipulated in the resolutions and statements adopted by the Security Council. We reiterate our appeal to the parties to comply with those provisions.

The efforts of KFOR to control attacks by Albanian extremists carried out from the safety zone in southern Serbia have yielded results, as reflected in the number of detainees and decommissioned weapons and in the reduction in the number of violent attacks. It is clear that the situation in the zone remains tense and should thus continue to be of concern to the international community. We cannot let the Presevo valley — in which the safety zone was set up to provide a solution — become a greater problem for the region.

I believe we all agree that general elections must be organized in Kosovo. What divides us is the when, the how and the why. It is not entirely clear what bodies will be elected and what their functions will be. Until that is clarified, UNMIK cannot set a date.

Turning to the peace initiative offered last week by the Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Serbia, Mr. Covic, we consider that the proposal to include the Albanian population in the search for a final solution for southern Serbia could be a first step towards a negotiated result. We are aware that a number of elements remain to be negotiated among the parties, and we hope that they will reach an agreement as soon as possible so as to put an end once and for all to the violence in the Presevo valley. If the parties feel

that the international community should assist in that process, we would be prepared to do this; if, on the other hand, they feel we should simply be observers, we would do that as well.

At the 18 January meeting of the Security Council on this item, I said that,

"To a large degree, the legitimacy and prestige of the Security Council and of the United Nations are at stake when it comes to the effectiveness of [the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia] and its officers. Furthermore, the validity of international criminal law is also at stake." (S/PV.4258, p. 21)

And today, I wish to — indeed, I must — conclude my statement with a comment on the same subject: the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia. Ambassador Lavrov of the Russian Federation made reference to the Tribunal, and specifically to Ms. Carla Del Ponte.

I knew Ms. Del Ponte when I served as Attorney-General in Colombia and when she held the same post in Switzerland. I know her commitment, her values and her respect for the rule of law. It is not my purpose to defend her today; we will have another opportunity to evaluate the work of the Tribunal. Nor do I wish to go into detail about the specific situation to which Ambassador Lavrov made reference, when he spoke of the "unacceptable" "top-secrecy" (*supra*) of the summary of the report on the topic he mentioned, and when he said that only the full report would suffice. I wish simply to observe that the administration of justice is a very difficult and risky job. But it is governed by certain sacred rules, one of which is the obligation to be discreet and not to make public anything or any evidence that could affect or destroy an investigation and that could thus weaken the Tribunal itself — which I think would run counter to what the Security Council should be doing. As I said on 18 January,

"we believe that the Security Council should do everything in its power to ensure that we achieve the objective for which the Tribunal was established." (S/PV.4258, p. 21)

Mr. Kolby (Norway): Let me join others in thanking the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Mr. Guéhenno, for his excellent briefing. I reiterate Norway's full support for

the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Hans Haekkerup, and for the main priorities he has outlined for the further work of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) in implementing resolution 1244 (1999).

We support the efforts of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General to prepare for province-wide elections in Kosovo. However, elections should be held only when all necessary requirements are met. Premature or ill-prepared elections for a provincial assembly risk undermining the stability we set out to bolster. Among the steps that need to be taken is to define the role and functions of a provincial assembly. In elaborating a framework for elections, it will be also be crucial to ensure arrangements that facilitate the participation of minorities and that allow their legitimate interests to be adequately represented.

Norway agrees that another priority must be the strengthening of the judiciary and law enforcement. Ethnically based violence must be curbed and the widespread criminality combated. The lack of public trust in the law enforcement agencies and in the judiciary makes this an urgent task.

We further appreciate the emphasis placed by Mr. Haekkerup on the establishment of a good working relationship with Yugoslav authorities. Such a relationship should allow for consultations on all main issues pertaining to resolution 1244 (1999), including the elaboration of a framework for elections and for a provincial assembly.

We are very concerned about the recent surge in tension and violent clashes in Mitrovica, which underline the need for additional confidence-building efforts. Kosovo Serb and Kosovo Albanian leaders must take a larger responsibility for preventing further escalation of violence. Any attacks on international personnel or on minorities must be condemned in the strongest terms.

Developments in the Presevo Valley continue to give reason for deep concern. The tense situation in the area threatens to make it the next focal point of conflict in the Balkans, with potential implications not only for Serbia proper, but also for the Kosovo province as well as for neighbouring countries. With the arrival of spring, tension might easily escalate further. It is therefore paramount that the crisis be addressed now.

The Belgrade authorities have taken a constructive approach to the situation in southern Serbia. Norway welcomes the elaboration of a comprehensive plan on how to address the crisis, as recently discussed in the Serbian and Federal Governments.

The seriousness of the situation on the ground requires a rapid implementation of the plan. The dialogue established between the Serb authorities and ethnic Albanian leaders in southern Serbia is an encouraging first step in this respect. While it is urgent to initiate further confidence-building measures, we believe it is also important to provide international assistance, as requested by Federal Republic of Yugoslavia authorities, without delay. Given careful and speedy implementation, the constructive participation of all involved and adequate international assistance, the plan will contribute to reducing tension in the area.

The Kosovo Force and UNMIK must further strengthen their efforts to curb violations of the ground safety zone. This should be carried out in close cooperation with the Belgrade authorities. At the same time, local Albanian leaders must be discouraged from providing overt or implicit support to the armed groups.

Let me end by expressing Norway's full support for the work of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia. Its mandate also covers Kosovo, and we trust it will be accorded full cooperation by all parties involved.

Mr. Ward (Jamaica): My delegation joins in thanking Under-Secretary-General Guéhenno for his detailed briefing on the situation in Kosovo. It is important that the Security Council be kept fully informed of the problems and the actions taken to alleviate them.

Many of the concerns that were expressed by my delegation at the meeting on 18 January still remain of particular concern, especially the situations in the Presevo Valley and, more recently, in Mitrovica. We urge the parties involved to bring an end to this cycle of violence. Without the resolution of these problems, the hope for peace and reconciliation in Kosovo will be elusive.

We are also concerned about the potential for the destabilization of the whole region. The information

provided by Mr. Guéhenno on the actions being taken by the Kosovo Force (KFOR) is welcome, and these actions have our full support. We are also pleased to hear of the confidence-building measures being employed by the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, and my delegation offers its full support for these measures.

The recent spate of violence in Mitrovica is extremely worrying to my delegation, and the attacks against United Nations peacekeepers is an alarming development. We are concerned that the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) was forced to pull its staff out of southern Mitrovica. My delegation attaches great importance to the role of UNHCR, and all parties are responsible for ensuring that its work is facilitated and unhindered. We welcome the declaration signed by the Kosovo Albanian leaders aimed at restoring calm in the area. Their role is of extremely great importance to the process of peace and reconciliation.

My delegation has in the past addressed the situation of trafficking in persons. We were pleased to learn of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) regulation making trafficking in persons a crime punishable by imprisonment. We note that recently the first guilty verdict for trafficking in women has been issued in Kosovo. We agree that the verdict sends to those who would buy and sell human beings for profit a strong message that the courts will support the police with strong sanctions.

We are also concerned about the reports of growing drug use in Kosovo, and we note the efforts of UNMIK and the Kosovo police in dealing with the situation.

My delegation continues to stress that until the issue of detained and missing persons is addressed, peace and reconciliation in Kosovo will be elusive. We hope that advances will be made in this area in the near future. We note that the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General has said that this is high on his priority list. We hope that the cooperation between Belgrade and UNMIK will lead to a solution to the problem. We urge UNMIK to continue addressing this situation. Enhanced communication with the authorities in Belgrade should help to resolve this problem, and my delegation urges enjoining the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to include these detainees in the amnesty

law or effect their releases through presidential decree. My delegation wishes to reiterate that the provisions of Security Council resolution 1244 (1999) must serve as the basis for the work of UNMIK and that this resolution must be fully implemented.

We continue our support for the work of UNMIK as it works in collaboration with the people of Kosovo to prepare the province for substantial autonomy. We believe that the process of defining autonomy and of developing institutions of self-government, with the people of Kosovo sharing more and more responsibility in the administration of the province, must be actively pursued. As UNMIK develops the legal framework for Kosovo, we urge that in this context the concept of substantial autonomy be clearly defined before the province-wide elections, thereby removing the issue as a focus of the election campaign and removing any confusion as to its meaning in the post-election period.

We support the building of effective law enforcement and an effective judiciary as one of the four priorities for UNMIK. As we have said in the past, peace and reconciliation are not possible without a judiciary that dispenses justice without fear or favour.

Mr. Neewoor (Mauritius): We appreciate the comprehensive briefing given to us by Mr. Guehenno.

The situation in Kosovo today obviously has not undergone any significant change since the Council was last briefed a couple of weeks ago. We note with concern that violence has continued, the worst case being the events in Mitrovica in which a number of United Nations peacekeepers were injured. We need hardly emphasize that the first and foremost task before the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) and the Kosovo Force (KFOR) is to curb all violence so that the process of peace-building can proceed.

We commend UNMIK for the comprehensive plan it is implementing to restore peace and normalcy in Kosovo. We wish to reiterate that Kosovars' destiny can only be multi-ethnic coexistence.

We stress that, in the preparations for the proposed elections, UNMIK must ensure that all ethnic groups have the opportunity to participate. In that regard, the opening of an UNMIK office in Belgrade is extremely important, as it would facilitate the participation in the elections of Serbs who are at present constrained from leaving their homes in

Kosovo. It is also important that the legal and administrative authorities of Kosovo should provide for the representation of all ethnic groups.

Finally, we urge the Serbian authorities to release all Albanian prisoners still being held in Serbian prisons. A general amnesty in that regard can be very helpful for the establishment of inter-ethnic harmony.

My delegation fully supports the work of UNMIK for the implementation of resolution 1244 (1999).

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as representative of Tunisia.

At the outset, I would like to thank Mr. Guehenno, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, for his detailed and useful briefing on the situation in Kosovo.

The Balkan region has witnessed new and important developments in recent months. Those developments have been manifested in a clear political will to overcome obstacles and arrive at a final and comprehensive settlement of this issue. They have also opened up new and truly encouraging horizons for all parties. This calls for the international community to support the recently manifested will in order to establish peace in the region and implement the relevant resolutions of the Security Council, particularly resolution 1244 (1999).

We are concerned about continuing acts of violence in the Presevo Valley, as well as in the ground security zone. Those acts could have negative repercussions, jeopardizing peace and security and undermining the efforts of the international community in the region.

At the same time, we express our optimism about the path chosen by the authorities in Belgrade to contain the crisis through political negotiations and the establishment of a plan to guarantee the rights of ethnic Albanians and improve their living conditions, which will contribute to their integration into the economic cycle and to normalizing the situation in the region.

With regard to the situation inside Kosovo, I will confine my comments to four issues we believe to be of great importance.

First, at the top of our list of priorities in Kosovo is to address the root causes of violence. Despite the marked improvement in the region, there clearly

remain sources of tension and instability. In our view, this situation cannot be overcome without achieving a permanent reconciliation among the ethnic groups that would guarantee their coexistence in peace and safety and steer them towards a better future.

Secondly, we believe that reconciliation cannot be brought about without providing the necessary, objective conditions. By this I mean finding a definitive and comprehensive solution to the question of missing persons and detainees, in particular now that Ambassador Amneus has been appointed as Special Envoy on Persons Deprived of Liberty. Arrangements should also be made to facilitate the safe return of refugees and displaced persons. They must be given the opportunity to settle and to be integrated socially and economically into society.

Thirdly, the thesis of Tunisian sociologist Ibn Khaldūn — who is known as the founder of sociology — that justice is the basis of civilization applies fully to the situation in Kosovo. An impartial judiciary would reassure Kosovo's residents, enhance their sense of security and contribute to a normalization of the situation there. We therefore urge the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo to continue to make efforts aimed at reform of the judiciary, with a view to implementing the laws in force in an impartial and non-discriminatory manner.

Fourthly, the legislative elections scheduled to be held shortly represent an important step on the road to develop a practical plan for the implementation of large-scale self-government, as envisaged in Security Council resolution 1244 (1999). Serious preparations should therefore be made to hold those elections within a legal context so as to guarantee the participation of all in an atmosphere of security and respect for others' differences.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I invite the representative of Sweden to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Schori (Sweden) (*spoke in French*): I offer my warm thanks to Jean-Marie Guéhenno for his important contribution.

(*spoke in English*)

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU). The Central and Eastern

European countries associated with the European Union — Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia — and the associated countries Cyprus, Malta and Turkey, as well as the European Free Trade Association country member of the European Economic Area, Iceland, align themselves with this statement.

First, the EU would like to pledge its full support to Mr. Hans Haekkerup, the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Kosovo, as he seeks to address the remaining challenges in Kosovo.

The EU welcomes the progress made in Kosovo in the implementation of resolution 1244 (1999) and fully supports the continued efforts of the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General to establish democratic, self-governing institutions in Kosovo in order to provide substantial autonomy for the people of Kosovo in accordance with that resolution. The EU fully supports the efforts of the Special Representative to establish a legal and administrative framework for Kosovo-wide elections, aimed at creating a body of democratically elected representatives of all national communities. The involvement of the people of Kosovo in the formation of their economic, social and political future will bring in an important element of accountability and is essential for the long-term security and stability of the whole region.

It is the view of the EU that certain steps need to be carried out before elections can be held. These include the implementation of the results of the municipal elections, preparations for a new and inclusive voter registration and the definition of the mandate and composition of a Kosovo-wide assembly, as well as other Kosovo-wide institutions. It is of crucial importance that all ethnic groups participate in the elections. In this regard, the European Union encourages the authorities of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to support the electoral process and to exert their influence to ensure the participation of Kosovo Serbs in this process.

The EU supports the efforts to increase the dialogue and cooperation between the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) and relevant institutions of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and welcomes the democratic progress achieved in that country and in Serbia, most recently

through the victory of the democratic forces in the elections of December 2000. The EU expects that this progress will enable essential political, economic and social reforms to be carried out within the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, which could also contribute to reducing tensions in Kosovo and in the Presevo area of southern Serbia.

In this respect, the EU urges Yugoslav and Serb authorities to find the appropriate legal channels for a speedy release of remaining Kosovo Albanian and other prisoners held without charges or on political grounds, as well as for an accounting of missing persons from all sides. Such measures could also constitute a significant contribution towards the beginning of a dialogue between representatives of Kosovo and Belgrade. The EU also reiterates its call on Yugoslav/Serbian authorities to comply with their obligation to fully cooperate with the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia.

Action to combat violence and enhance the security situation for everyone in Kosovo should remain a top priority for UNMIK and the Kosovo Force (KFOR). It is deplorable that men, women and children in Kosovo continue to be killed because of their ethnic background and that moderate opinions expressed by politically engaged Kosovars can be dangerous to their safety.

The EU vigorously condemns the use of violence, extremism and any act which makes the coexistence of communities more difficult and which adversely affects regional stability. In this context, the EU encourages further confidence-building measures between the different ethnic communities in Kosovo and fully supports the right of all displaced people from Kosovo to return to their homes in peace, security and dignity.

The European Union is deeply concerned about the recent upsurge of violence in the town of Mitrovica. Such incidents severely jeopardize confidence building between ethnic communities and undermine the activities of the members of the international community who work in the interest of the people of Kosovo. Kosovo is benefiting from substantial international political, military and financial support aimed at creating conditions for a peaceful and prosperous future. This support requires the active cooperation of all citizens of Kosovo and their leaders.

An important aspect of enhancing the security situation in Kosovo is to reduce the overall level of

criminality and to enforce respect for the rule of law. To this end, more than 800 civilian police, as well as judges and prosecutors, from EU member States are serving in Kosovo. The EU also supports the work of the Kosovo Police Service School to train local police and police trainers. Furthermore, EU member States contribute more than 60 per cent of the troops of KFOR, which continues to play a crucial role in maintaining stability and security in Kosovo. The EU is also pleased to note that the efforts of the international community to enhance security and stabilization have been significantly supported by Central and Eastern European countries associated with the EU, as well as by the associated country Turkey, in the form of contributions of troops, civilian police and other specialists to KFOR and UNMIK.

Another priority for the European Union is to contribute to the reconstruction and economic development of Kosovo. Being by far the single largest donor providing assistance to Kosovo, the European Union has allocated nearly €900 million in reconstruction and humanitarian aid since 1998. The EU will remain at the forefront of the reconstruction efforts in Kosovo, having committed €175 million for this purpose for the year 2001. In this regard, the EU believes that it is important to continue to create favourable conditions for the economic development of Kosovo by establishing viable and efficient economic structures, including in the fiscal area.

The EU strongly condemns the violence and illegal actions by ethnic Albanian armed groups in southern Serbia, and particularly in the Ground Safety Zone, and reiterates its call, as expressed in the statement of the President of the Security Council of 19 December 2000, for an immediate and complete cessation of violence in that area. The EU calls upon all involved to exercise maximum restraint and to resolve any differences exclusively through peaceful dialogue. The EU is strongly concerned with increased tensions in the area that could impede Transport Corridor X, which constitutes one of the main northern outlets of the Balkan countries. The EU welcomes specific measures taken by KFOR and UNMIK to address the problem, including increased surveillance of the administrative boundary.

The EU also welcomes the commitment of the authorities of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to work towards a peaceful settlement and to respect the provisions of resolution 1244 (1999) and the Military-

Technical Agreement, and encourages the efforts to initiate confidence-building measures in order to stabilize the situation in that area. These measures should include the extension of civil rights to ethnic Albanians in the area and concrete steps regarding the posture of Yugoslav/Serb military and police in the area.

In order to further contribute to the stabilization of the situation, the EU is currently considering an enhanced presence of its monitoring mission in the affected area.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of Yugoslavia.

Mr. Mladenović (Yugoslavia): I would like to thank you, Sir, for convening this meeting. I would also like to thank Under-Secretary-General Guéhenno for his briefing.

The situation in Kosovo and Metohija, the autonomous province of the Yugoslav constituent Republic of Serbia, continues to be unsatisfactory. This is due primarily to the fact that the key provisions of Security Council resolution 1244 (1999), especially those concerning the need to create a secure environment and to protect Serbs and other non-Albanians, have not been fulfilled. Constant threats, violence and armed attacks against the remaining Serbs and other non-Albanians living in enclaves provide ample evidence that not enough has been done to put tensions to rest, to have the expelled Serbs returned and to create conditions for multi-ethnic life in that southern Serbian province.

The problem of Kosovo and Metohija is very complex. It can be solved only through a consistent implementation of Security Council resolution 1244 (1999) and in cooperation with the competent authorities of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the Republic of Serbia. Attempts to solve it hastily and inadequately may only exacerbate the situation. Such an attempt is the holding of so-called Kosovo-wide elections. We consider that such elections cannot be free, fair or democratic short of a precise definition of the authorities they are to be held for and the definition of the competencies of those authorities, or without the creation of conditions for a safe return of all displaced persons. Additionally, the elections should be prepared in cooperation with the authorities of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the Republic of Serbia.

Also, we consider that it is necessary to find a just solution for all detained, missing and abducted persons, which would contribute to building mutual trust. The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia will soon adopt a new amnesty law, which, we hope, will positively affect the resolution of many issues in this field. Yet the problem of the Serbs and other non-Albanians gone missing in Kosovo and Metohija since the deployment of the Kosovo Force (KFOR) remains. We demand a more robust investigation of their fate.

I would like to reiterate that the Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia continues to be committed to the consistent implementation of Security Council resolution 1244 (1999) and the Kumanovo Military-Technical Agreement, and it is ready to strengthen its cooperation with UNMIK and KFOR. It is also ready to conclude an agreement on their status in this Serbian province.

The difficult and tense situation in the ground safety zone, in the municipalities of Bujanovac, Medvedja and Presevo in southern Serbia, Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, also causes grave concern to my Government. The way the situation has evolved in this area demonstrates how dangerous it is for the region as a whole not to implement Security Council resolution 1244 (1999) fully and consistently. This is yet another reason for us to ask whether those responsible have used all the opportunities and authority at their disposal to fully meet their responsibilities stemming from that resolution.

The Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia has repeatedly drawn the Security Council's attention to the fact that the situation in the ground safety zone in southern Serbia, brought about by armed groups of Albanian extremists and terrorists that infiltrate from Kosovo and Metohija, is unacceptable. These Albanian armed groups are threatening the lives and security of local citizens, their fundamental human rights and the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the Republic of Serbia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, and thereby peace and security in the region.

It is therefore necessary for the Security Council to undertake resolute steps in order to fulfil the demands contained in its presidential statement of 19 December 2000, calling for an urgent and total end to violence, the disbandment of extremist groups of ethnic

Albanians and their immediate withdrawal from the region and from the ground safety zone in particular.

The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and its Government recently adopted a plan and a programme for the resolution of the crisis caused by the activities of Albanian terrorist groups in the municipalities of Bujanovac, Presevo and Medvedja. The main characteristics of this plan include the resolution of the crisis by peaceful means, with the participation of the representatives of the Albanian ethnic community and with the support of the international community. The goal is to resolve this problem in a democratic and transparent manner.

The key goals of the plan include the establishment of the State sovereignty and territorial integrity of Serbia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in that part of their territory, the preservation and development of the multi-ethnic character of the region, respecting all civil and human rights of the Albanian ethnic community, the protection of the basic interests of Serbs in the region and of their personal property and security, and building a multi-ethnic society based on democracy, with the viable economic development of the municipalities of Presevo, Bujanovac and Medvedja.

The plan envisages a three-phase resolution. In the first phase, which is under way, an appeal was sent to the Albanian ethnic community for a peaceful solution including a request that no terrorist acts be carried out until the end of the negotiations. For its part, the army and the police would undertake only defensive activity pending the end of the negotiations.

Agreement on the resolution is expected in the second phase. This would include the total and lasting cessation of all terrorist acts, the disarmament of terrorists and the dismantling of fortification structures. This would be followed by the withdrawal of military and police forces, while regular mixed local police and military units, including border control units, would remain. This would create conditions to unblock the roads and enable the free return of displaced persons. All those who did not take part in violent actions until the end of this phase would not be prosecuted. Before starting this phase, it would be necessary to reduce or totally eliminate the ground safety zone, on the basis of our previous proposals, for which we expect the international community's understanding.

In the third and final phase, full security and peace in the region will be established, which would enable the Albanian ethnic community to be integrated into the political, State and social systems and to have their human rights respected in line with the highest European standards. The integration of Albanians would reflect the local ethnic composition in the State institutions, economy and social activity. This would entail an appropriate representation of ethnic Albanians on the executive boards of municipalities and in the Government of Serbia, the elimination of all forms of human rights violations through more effective control of police and other Government bodies and free access for accredited human rights organizations to examine the situation in the field. This should create the conditions for economic and social development in the region, in accordance with agreed priorities and projects.

In adopting this plan and calling the Albanian community in the municipalities of Bujanovac, Medvedja and Presevo to negotiations, the Governments of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the Republic of Serbia has made a decisive commitment to resolving the crisis by peaceful and democratic means. We very much appreciate the support of the international community for this approach.

It is now up to the ethnic Albanian community to demonstrate whether it is truly ready to accept the plan. We underline that it is necessary to start a dialogue without delay. With the passage of time, there would be less and less chance of resolving the crisis in a peaceful, diplomatic manner. Should that not come about, the responsibility would rest with the members of the ethnic Albanian community in southern Serbia, of which the international community should take account. The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the Republic of Serbia cannot exercise indefinite patience, since maintaining the situation as it is — the status quo — is totally unacceptable.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now call on Mr. Guéhenno to respond to the questions and comments put to him.

Mr. Guéhenno: I will convey to Special Representative Hans Haekkerup and his staff the support that was expressed around this table for his efforts.

I would like to address the one specific question that was put to me on security by the representative of the United Kingdom, and in particular on the provision of international judges.

The development of a judiciary system in Kosovo that really builds trust between the various communities is a key foundation. It is a building block of any stable peace in that part of the world. We have seen that international judges are very helpful in that respect, not only because they create the perception of impartiality and help consolidate that perception, but also because they make it easier for those local judges who want to be impartial to be so and to resist the pressures that can be exerted upon them.

In that respect, we have increased the number of international judges. Last December there were only 10 international judges and 3 international prosecutors. As I said in my briefing, we now have 12 judges and 5 prosecutors, which means that we can cover all five regions of Kosovo, with an international presence in the judiciary, which is very important.

We will continue to discuss with the Mission whether we can go further in developing the presence of international justice, because a delicate balance has to be maintained between local empowerment of justice and the international presence. This is a very delicate balance. But we will continue to discuss with the Mission whether we can make improvements and go further. We welcome offers from Member States to provide international judges, because it is a very difficult and challenging job. We are very grateful to all of those countries that have provided international judges in Kosovo.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank Mr. Guéhenno for the clarifications he has provided.

There are no further speakers inscribed on my list.

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 1.25 p.m.